C4722-2

- Wisconsin Bell MMDS plan may serve as blueprint elsewhere
- Growing pains at Lifetime
- Home Shopping Network launches nationally
- Backyard dish fee plans spreading among basic networks

ATC tackles customer service woes

CableVision

The news and features weekly of the cable television industry

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The Disney challenge: Distinction with diversity

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Leading the Week 11-28

MDS interest grows

Wisconsin Bell's plan to establish a statewide multichannel MDS system for the Milwaukee Educational Communications Board has spawned interest among other telephone companies that could lead to similar projects elsewhere.

San Diego overbuild

The San Diego City Council has directed its city attorney to prepare several versions of a request for proposals that will be issued to solicit bids for overbuilding the existing cable system. Three companies have voiced interest in an overbuild.

Construction go-ahead

Three cable companies awarded franchises in New York City's outer boroughs have received conditional okay to begin construction. Two other firms have been put on hold.

Lifetime changes

The Lifetime network has trimmed its staff by 8 percent by dropping 15 employees, including three top level officials. The move is part of a "reorganizational" effort.

Dish fees growing

In the wake of Turner Broadcasting's recent decision to levy dues on TVRO homes, ESPN and United Video have followed suit with charge plans of their own.

TCI funding conditions

Officials of District Cablevision Inc. and Tele-Communications Inc. told the city council that TCI will provide all funding necessary to build the Washington D.C. cable system, but only if the city council grants the package of concessions requested by TCI.

TBS claim disputed

In a filing at the Federal Communications Commission, CBS has disputed Turner Broadcasting System's claim that its takeover bid of the network is financially viable. The brief highlighted a number of what the network called "factual disputes" concerning the profitability of a merger.

CBS stock buyback plan

In a move which many analysts believe could block Ted Turner's $5.4-billion bid to take over CBS, the network announced a $954.8-million stock buyback plan to repurchase up to 21 percent of the company's outstanding stock for $150 per share in cash and notes. CBS also said it has filed suit in federal court against Turner Broadcasting alleging violations of federal securities law.

Philadelphia contracts

The logjam in negotiations has been broken in Philadelphia, allowing three of the four franchise winners there to examine the final contracts for building the city's cable system.

HSN now a basic

After three years of building up its business in Florida cable systems, Home Shopping Network became a basic channel July 1. The five-hour daily operation was launched on 324 systems, reaching almost 6.5 million homes.

Private ticket unveiled

Private Ticket, Playboy Enterprises' pay-per-view service, made its debut July 1 on three systems with a base of about 100,000 addressable households. The venture features adult movies and original Playboy Channel material.

Historic deal

In a deal valued at over $230 million, Storer Communications and Times Mirror have concluded an agreement to exchange cable systems serving more than 220,000 subscribers in five states. The system swap is the largest in the history of the industry.

'Operator's nightmare'

In what one observer termed an "operator's nightmare!" Group W Cable's service to El Segundo, Calif., was raked over the coals at a recent public hearing.

Chernin blasts PPV opponents

Those who say pay-per-view will kill pay TV have an "isolationist" attitude, according to Peter Chernin, Showtime/TMC chief programmer. He says PPV relieve the logistical burdens home video households face.

Operators happy

Cable operators were generally pleased with the first meeting of a Los Angeles City Council subcommittee on refranchising guidelines. A United Cable official said the council is beginning to see "what is affordable in one area is not necessarily called for in another area."

Cover story

After a rough beginning, The Disney Channel has become a cable success story, sporting more than 2 million subs. But the channel is still in transition, and operators are hoping pricing issues and programming changes will boost national penetration.

Review **29**

According to Robert DiMatteo, the worst thing about Joan Rivers' Showtime special is the fact the comedienne is boring. Despite an all-star cast, *Joan Rivers and Friends Salute Heidi Abromowitz. . . Almost Live from Caesars Palace*, is "grotesque."

Departments

Programming **29**
Business & Finance **36**
Stock Market **36**
New Products **40**
Events **41**
People **42**
Classifieds **45**
Advertisers' Index **47**
Cable Stats **48**
Parting Words **50**
Readers' Channel **50**

Franchising calendar

This chart examines the franchise status of communities since June 1985.

California

Chino—Proposals received from Marsh Media, BuenaVision, Cable TV West, Masada and D.C. Cable.
Claremont—Bids received from Masada Corp. and Daniels and Assoc.
East Yolo—reviewing applications from Sonic Cable, Yolo Cable TV, Yolo Cable Communications Co. and Pacific Federal Communications (10,000 homes).
La Puente—award to United Cable 11/28/84 (8,600 homes).
Los Altos—award to United Cable 12/84 (9,000 homes).
Palo Alto—negotiating with Cable Communications Co-op of Palo Alto and City Cable Partners Inc. until April (23,000 homes).
Rosemead—award to Falcon Communications 2/26/85 (14,000 homes).
South Monrovia—award to Falcon Communications 9/18 (5,400 homes).

Delaware

Wilmington—negotiating with Rollins Cable (140,000 homes).

District of Columbia

Washington, D.C.—award to District Cablevision 7/10/84 (254,000 homes).

Illinois

Chicago—Area I award to Communications and Cable (300,000 homes).
Countryside—award to Cablevision of Chicago 6/13/84 (2,200 homes).
Elmwood Park—award to Continental Cable 12/17/84 (9,500 homes).
Naperville—award to Rite Cable Co. of Illinois Limited. Rite Cable of Illinois also awarded unincorporated areas of DuPage County. (17,500 homes).
St. Charles, Geneva—award to Centel 7/2/84 (10,000 homes).
Wheaton—award to Centel 7/2/84 (16,000 homes).
Winnetka—survey showed interest in cable insufficient to warrant franchise.
Woodbridge—terminated franchising process (260 homes).

Kentucky

Fulton—award to TCI 12/13/84 (2,400 homes).
Loretto—terminated franchise process.

Maryland

Baltimore—award to United Cable 12/19/84 (302,000 homes).

Massachusetts

Belchertown—negotiating with Clearview Cablevision.
Belmont—accepting proposals. (2,760 homes).
Berkley, Dighton, Freetown—award to Continental Cablevision.
Boxborough—award to Nashoba 1/7/85 (3,100 homes).
Cambridge—award to American Cable Systems of Cambridge 3/22/85 (43,000 homes).
Danvers—award to Nashoba 1/85 (8,600 homes).
East Bridgewater—award to Continental Cable 12/3/84 (2,500 homes).
Groton—award to United Video 2/25.
Hamilton and Wenham—award to Continental Cable 3/5/84 (2,300 homes).
Holden—award to Massachusetts Cablevision Systems Inc. 7/84 (4,000 homes).
Holliston—award to Massachusetts Cablevision Systems Inc. 7/84 (3,922 homes).
Lincoln—short franchise process re-initiated.
Marblehead—award to Continental Cable 12/84.
Medfield—provisional license to Massachusetts Cablevision 2/85 (3,400 homes).
Mendon—award to Massachusetts Cablevision Systems 1/7 (1,200 homes).
Middleborough—award to Continental Cablevision 5/14/84 (3,834 homes).
Nahant—accepting proposals. (1,433 homes).
Rochester—accepting applications until 8/12/85.
Sandwich—award to Campbell Communications (5,000 homes).
Seekonk—Award to Massachusetts Cablevision 6/85. (6,000 homes.
Shirley—provisional license granted to Nashoba Communications 10/84. Reviewing contract. (1,827 homes).
Southborough—provisional license to Greater Worcester Cablevision (2,000 homes).
Sterling—award to Wachusett Cablevision (2,000 homes).
Stow—provisional license to Adams-Russell 9/84. (1,600 homes).
Townsend—reviewing proposals from United Video Cablevision and Nashoba Communications. (2,306 homes).
Wayland—award to Continental Cablevision 6/4/84 (3,500 homes).
Westminster—preliminary award to Adams-Russell; Adams-Russell requested revision of rate structure.
Weston—award to Continental Cable Cooperative 8/6/84 (3,000 homes).
Westport—award to United Cablevision Funding 9/4/84 (5,500 homes).

Michigan

Almont—award to Michigan Cable 11/84.
Atlas—award to Michigan Cable 8/84.
Brandon—award to Michigan Cable 11/84.
Brown City—award to Pioneer Cablevision.
Cedar Creek—award to Horizon Cable 7/84.
Dalton—award to Horizon Cable 7/84.
Goodrich—award to Michigan Cable 9/84.
Lake Orion, Orion Twp—award to Tribune-United 12/84 (7,800 homes).
North Branch—award to Michigan Cable 8/84.
Thortonville—award to Michigan Cable.
Waccnia—award to Westel 12/18/84 (1,024 homes).
Windom—approved municipal ownership, launched 2/1/84 (1,875 homes).

Minnesota

Amboy—award to Mid Communications Inc. 7/84 (280 homes).
Barrett—award to Battlelake Cable 7/84 (165 homes).
Belle Plaine—award to Dow-Sat of Minnesota 11/84 (973 homes).
Big Lake, Buffalo, Cokato, Dassel, Delano, Elk River, Monticello, Rockford, Watertown, Maple Lake—award to Rite Cable, under construction. (10,200 homes).
Bird Island—award to North American Communications Corp. 10/84 (566 homes).
Cannon Falls—award to North American Cable Communications Corp. (1,080 homes).
Credit River—award to North American Communications Corp. 10/84 (880 homes).
Eden Valley and Watkins—award to WesTel Inc. 2/84 (640 homes).
Floodwood—award to Individual Satellite System Inc. 8/84 (325 homes).
Glenville—award to WesTel 8/84 (275 homes).
Good Thunder—award to Mid Communications Inc. 7/84 (226 homes).
Grand Meadow—award to Southern Cablevision Inc. 9/84 (360 homes).
Hill City—award to Individual Satellite Systems 11/84 (400 homes).
Hinckley—award to Savage Communications 7/84 (420 homes).
Hokah—award to Valley Video Systems Inc. 7/84 (270 homes).
Holdingford—award to WesTel Inc. 2/84 (245 homes).
Howard Lake—award to WesTel Inc. 8/84 (510 homes).
Kandiyohi—award to Kavanaugh Cable Co. 4/1/85 (200 homes).
Kerkhoven—award to Heritage Communications 7/84 (310 homes).
Lester Prairie, Winsted—award to Dowden Communications 7/84 (1,000 homes).
Lindstrom, Stacy—award to Dow-Sat of Minnesota (1,230 homes).
Mabel—award to Valley Video Systems Inc. 6/84 (325 homes).
Maple Plain—award to Dow-Sat of Minnesota (481 homes).
Mapleton—award to WesTel Inc. 8/84 (600 homes).
Mazeppa—award to Individual Satellite Systems 9/84 (280 homes).
Medford—award to WesTel Inc. 7/84 (300 homes).
Montrose—award transferred to Valley View 8/84 (300 homes).
Morristown—award to Cannon Valley Telecom Inc. 7/84 (250 homes).
Morton—award to Todd Communications Inc. 5/84 (225 homes).
Murdock—award to Kavanaugh Cable Co. 6/84 (140 homes).
New Prague—award to Valley View Cable Inc. 7/84 (1,130 homes).
Nieswa—award to Interlake Cablevision Inc. 5/84 (1,100 homes).
Northern Dakota City—preliminary award to Continental (25,000 homes).
Pennock—award to Kavanaugh Cable Co. 4/11/85 (175 homes).
Pierz—award to WesTel Inc. 8/84 (420 homes).
Revville—award to WesTel Inc. 7/84 (600 homes).
Rite—award to Benton Cooperative Telephone Co. 8/84 (165 homes).
St. Joseph—award to WesTel Inc. (1,100 homes).
St. Paul—city wins appeal in favor of Continental Cablevision (111,000 homes).

Sandstone—award to Savage Communications 9/84 (560 homes).
Savage—preliminary award to North American Cable Communications 4/85 (1,272 homes).
Sherburn—award to Rite Cable (10,200 homes).
Spring Grove—award to Valley Video Systems 8/84 (560 homes).
Spring Lake—award to North American Communications Corp. 10/84 (920 homes).
TriCity Cable Commission (Cold Springs, Richmond, Rockville)—award to WesTel Inc. 8/84 (1,200 homes).
Truman—award to Terril Telephone Co. 5/84 (550 homes).
Waconia—award to Westel 12/18/84 (1,024 homes).
Waterville, Elysian—award to WesTel Inc. 6/84 (750 homes).
Waubeen—award to Harold Investments Inc. 9/84 (150 homes).
Wendell—award to M & E Cable 4/84 (95 homes).
West St. Paul, South St. Paul, Mendota Heights, Mendota, Inner Grove Heights, Lilydale, Sinfish Lake—award to Continental Cablevision. (24,032 homes).
Windom—approved municipal ownership, launched 2/1/84 (1,875 homes).

Missouri
St. Louis—award to STL Cablevision Partners Inc. (75% of city) and St. Louis City Communications (25% of city) 4/11/84 (178,000 homes).

New Hampshire
Keene—renewed franchise with Group W including a rebuild and rate increase (19,360 homes).
Manchester—award to United Cable.
Newton—negotiating with Harron Communications (1,124 homes).
Sandown—reviewing applications from Continental Cablevision (800 homes).

New Jersey
Jersey City—moving ahead on municipal ownership despite lawsuit by Controlled Cable originally granted franchise.
Patterson—reviewing proposals from Marsh Media, Greater Media, Patterson Communications Network, Patterson Cable Services and U.S. Cable and TCI (55,000 homes).

New York
Mt. Upton—terminated franchise process.
North Salem—award to Community Cable Services 12/84 (1,100 homes).
Portland—cable committee formed to begin franchise process. Tribune Cable, Harborview and U.S. Cable sent letters expressing interest (150 homes).

North Carolina
Davie County—award to Summit Cable.
Jackson—award to Cable East (400 homes).

Ohio
Avon—award to Space Cable of Ohio 4/84 (2,000 homes).
Cleveland—evaluating bids from Royal American Group, Greater Cleveland Cable TV Associates and Northcoast Cable.
Oberlin—preliminary award to Oberlin Cable Co-op 6/6/84 (2,600 homes).

Oregon
Dunthorpe—no response to RFP.
Sylvan—awaiting legal opinion needed for commission to vote on Sylvan Video Cable (1,200 homes).

Pennsylvania
Philadelphia—city is divided into four areas; Area I award to Greater Philadelphia Cablevision; Area II award to Wade Communications; Area III award to Rollins; Area IV award to Comcast 11/84 (each area: 155,000 homes).

Rhode Island
Newport (Area 7 includes Middletown, Portsmouth, Tiverton, Little Compton)—Bellevue Cablevision Inc. awarded franchise. Scheduled to launch in June 1985. (29,500 homes).
Superior Court and Rhode Island Supreme Court (29,500 homes).

Virginia
Manassas—reviewing proposals from Cablevision of Manassas Ltd., Teleset Communications Inc., C4 Media of Manassas Ltd. and City of Manassas Cable (5,510 homes).

Washington
Battle Ground—rewriting franchise ordinance.
Seattle—city is divided into four parts; Group W, Viacom and Seattle Community Cablevision serve overlapping sections of three parts; part IV is beginning franchising process.

Wisconsin
Hayward—award to Cable TV of Hayward (1,000 homes).
New Glarus—award to Telephone and Data Systems 7/84 (675 homes).
Waterford—award to Total TV 9/84 (600 homes).

Source: International Thomson Communications Inc.

Franchising in the top 50 markets

Rank	Market	Status of core city
1.	New York	Manhattan—3-OP, outer boroughs 8-FG
2.	Los Angeles	City is divided into 14 areas (A-n): 11-OP, 3-UC
3.	Chicago	City is divided into five areas: Area I-FG, Areas II, III-OP, Areas IV, V-PG
4.	Philadelphia	City is divided into four areas: Areas I, II, III, IV+G
5.	San Francisco	OP (system to be upgraded)
6.	Boston	OP
7.	Detroit	FG
8.	Washington, D.C.	FG
9.	Cleveland	RP
10.	Dallas/Ft. Worth	Two systems-OP
11.	Houston	Two systems-OP
12.	Pittsburgh	OP
13.	Miami	OP
14.	Seattle/Tacoma	City is divided into five parts: (4-OP), (1-BP); Tacoma-OP
15.	Minneapolis/St. Paul	OP/UC
16.	Atlanta	OP
17.	St. Louis	UC/FG
18.	Tampa/St. Petersburg	OP/OP
19.	Denver	OP
20.	Baltimore	FG
21.	Sacramento/Stockton	OP/OP
22.	Indianapolis	Two systems-OP
23.	Portland	Three systems-OP
24.	Phoenix	Three systems-OP
25.	Hartford/New Haven	Two systems-OP
26.	Cincinnati	OP
27.	San Diego	Two systems-OP
28.	Kansas City	OP
29.	Milwaukee	OP
30.	Nashville	OP
31.	Charlotte	OP
32.	Buffalo	OP
33.	Providence/New Bedford	OP/OP
34.	Orlando/Daytona Beach	Two systems-OP
35.	New Orleans	OP
36.	Memphis	OP
37.	Columbus	Four systems-OP
38.	Greenville/Asheville/Spartensburg	Three systems-OP
39.	Grand Rapids/Kalamazoo/Battle Creek	Three systems-OP
40.	Birmingham	OP
41.	Raleigh/Durham	Two systems-OP
42.	Oklahoma City	Two systems-OP
43.	Louisville	Two systems-OP
44.	Salt Lake City	OP
45.	San Antonio	OP
46.	Charleston/Huntington	Two systems-OP
47.	Norfolk/Newport News/New Hampton/Portsmouth	Four systems-OP
48.	Harrisburg/York/Lebanon/Lancaster	Four systems-OP
49.	Wilkes Barre/Scranton	Two systems-OP
50.	Albany/Schenectady/Troy	Three systems-OP

Legend

OP — operational
UC — under construction
FG — franchise granted
FP — franchise pending
PS — proposal submitted
RP — request for proposals issued
RPP — request for proposals pending
MO — considering municipal ownership
BP — beginning process

Source: International Thomson Communications Inc.